#### 3.7 OCEAN BREEZES SOUTH STUDY SITE

# 3.7.1 <u>Oualitative Site Description</u>

<u>Physical description.</u> This site (Figure 12) covers approximately 17 ha and lies at the southwest corner of Chincoteague Island, just southwest of a recently constructed trailer court.

The southeast corner of Chincoteague was formerly a large estuarine marsh (as shown in a 1943 U.S.G.S. topograph map). The Ocean Breezes South Study Site has been extensively altered in the last few years in an attempt to develop the site for commercial purposes. Much of the former estuarine marsh land has been filled and bulldozed. A dead-end canal resulted from fill placed during the early years of disturbance. This triangular site is currently bounded on two sides by roads and on the third side by the trailer court, so there is very little way for tidal salt water to flow into and out of the site. The only tidal outlets are (1) a small tidal creek which flows under the road almost due south into the nearby Andrews Landing Gut and (2) a culvert connecting Chincoteague Channel to Fowling Gut at the northwest end of the study area. The first creek is blocked by a

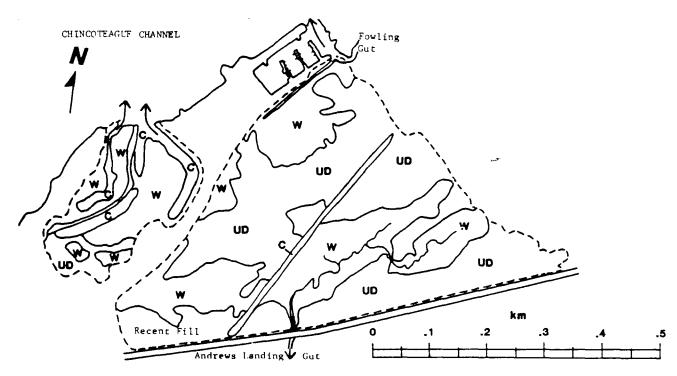


Figure 12. Map of Ocean Breezes South (right) and Chincoteague Channel Marsh (left) WIA's showing wetland (w) and undifferentiated (ud) areas. Channels (c) are shown and major outlets are indicated by arrows that depict the direction of water movement from the sites.

"flap gate" which allows water to drain the site freely but impedes flow into the site. This one-way "flap gate" is highly detrimental in that it impedes tidal flow and access by fishes to the wetland portion of the site while allowing outgoing tidal waters to drain out.

<u>Definitions.</u> The WIA consists of the site as outlined by the EPA. The basin for the site includes marsh and tidal creeks which flow southward into Andrews Landing Gut and northwestward into Chincoteague Channel. The sub-watershed consists of the higher, artificially filled areas within the site and several low-lying pine ridges that have persisted since disturbance.

Oualitative vegetation description. The remaining areas of estuarine wetlands within the interior of the site are covered with a combination of <u>Spartina patens</u>, <u>S. alterniflora</u>, <u>Distichlis</u>, and a few other salt marsh plants. The filled and altered upland areas are bare in some areas and have a thin cover of shrubs such as <u>Myrica</u>, <u>Iva</u>, and <u>Baccharis</u>. A few small pines are also scattered over this area.

Wetland classification. The wetlands at this site are largely estuarine emergent wetlands.

Substrate, water salinity. The substrate of this site is almost entirely sand. Under the remaining estuarine wetlands there is a layer of organic material (5-50 cm) overlying the sand. The water entering and leaving the site through the two remaining tidal outlets is typical estuarine water with a salinity of 15-30 ppt. There are a few cut-off, temporary pools of water which fluctuate according to rainfall conditions.

<u>Wildlife use.</u> The areas which remain as estuarine marsh continue to serve a nursery function for fishes and estuarine invertebrates. These wetlands are also utilized by waterfowl and shorebirds. The filled areas have passerine birds and occasional shorebirds. Evidence of small mammals (e.g. raccoons) can be found throughout the site.

Hydrologic functions. Water drains from the site through two outlets — one to Fowling Gut to the northwest and one to Andrews Landing Gut to the south. The latter is severely impaired by the aforementioned "flap gate" which if removed would allow normal tidal flow to the estuarine wetlands within the site. Much of the precipitation which falls upon the site probably infiltrates through the sand fill into the surface brackish aquifer and then moves laterally into the estuarine wetlands and creeks. Therefore, this site should have a moderate to high ground-water recharge and discharge potential along with a high nutrient retention potential. Flood storage, because of filling, is probably only of moderate potential.

## 3.7.2 Adamus and Stockwell Evaluations: Ocean Breezes South

### **Summary Sheet D**

This form is the appropriate place for recording the ratings that result from use of the interpretation procedures and keys in Sections 2.1.2, and 2.2.2. As each analysis is completed, enter its rating (high, moderate, or low; or A, B, or C) in the relevant box until all boxes for functions of interest are filled.

Begin by labeling the context of the analysis (pre- or post- construction, with or without mitigation, name of basin and WIA). Then enter the data, using the numbered footnotes to help locate the associated analyses. For the evaluation of each function's Effectiveness, enter whichever rating is higher -- That for the basin or that for the WIA. The evaluation of the impact vector is optional.

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GROUND WATER RECHARGE	low	moderate	low	moderate	low
GROUND WATER DISCHARGE	low		low	high	low
FLOOD STORAGE	high	high	high	moderate	high
SHORELINE ANCHORING	hian	moderate	high	high	very high
SEDIMENT TRAPPING	moderate	high	high	hiāh	very high
NUTRIENT RETENTION LONG-TERM* SEASONAL"	moderate moderate	high high	high high	high	very high
FOOD CHAIN SUPPORT DOWNSTREAM" IN-BASIN"	moderate moderate		moderate moderate	moderate	moderate moderate
FISHERY HABITAT WARMWATER'* COLDWATER'* COLDW.RIVERINE'*	low		low	moderate	low
ANADROMOUS RIV.	_moderate_		moderate		moderate
WILDLIFE HABITAT GENERAL DIVERSITY* WATERFOWL GP." 1 WATERFOWL GP." 2 SPECIES** COMMON Egret SPECIES**	summer	winter rate ** low low	moderate low low high	~moderate	moderate low low high
ACTIVE RECREATION® SWIMMING BOAT LAUNCHING POWER BOATING CANOEING SAILING	low low low low	·	low low low low low	moderate	low low low low low
PASSIVE RECREATION  AND HERITAGE®				moderate	moderate

#### **FOOTNOTES**

These entries will be based on analyses in the following parts of Volume II (numbers correspond to

footnotes above):

1-Forms A, Al (p. 6, 51); 2-Section 2.1.2.2. (p. 97); 3-Forms B, Bl (p. 38, 54); 4-Section 2.1.2.2. (p. 97); 5-Interpretation key in Section 2.1.2.1. p. 57; 6-p. 59; 7-p. 60; 8-p. 62; 9-p. 64; 10-p. 67; 11-p. 67; 12-p. 69; 13-p. 71; 14-p. 73; 15-p. 75; 16-p. 79; 17-p. 80; 18-p. 84; 19-p. 91; 20-p. 92;

<sup>\*</sup> Blue Fish, Hard Clam, Winter Flounder \*\*Artificial Water Fluctuation

Ocean Breezes South

## Response Sheet A1

THRESHOLD ANALYSIS: FUNCTIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

This sheet is the appropriate place for recording the responses to corresponding questions in Form A. A "yes" (Y) or "no" (N) response must be circled for all parts of each question, even when the response seems obvious. This response sheet has two major columns—"WIA" and "BASIN", and within each of these, three subcolumns entitled "\bar{x}", "\bar{y}", and "\bar{y}", which address, when relevent, the seasonal changes in some of the predictors, as follows:

#\_column responses are those addressing
either (a) the average annual condition, or
(b) the condition intermediate between the
wettest and driest annual conditions (e.g.,
late June in most Prairie pothole wetlands),
or (c) the condition of maximum annual
standing crop of wetland plants, or (d) if
tidal, the average daily mid-tide condition.

N column responses are those addressing what the area would look like (a) during the wettest time of an average year, or (b) if the area is tidal, what it would look like during an average daily high tide (flooded) condition.

O column responses are those addressing what the area would look like during either the driest time of the year (questions pertaining to hydrology) or if the question pertains to vegetation, then during the dormant time of the year. If the area is tidal, "O" refers to its daily low tide (exposed) condition.

For example, question 2.1.1 should first be asked and answered in the context of the WIA's (wetland impact area's) average condition, then in terms of its wettest condition, then the basin's average condition, and finally the basin's wettest condition. This should then be repeated for question 2.1.2. Because no Y/N choice is given in either "D" column, the area's dry or dormant condition need not be evaluated for this question. Similarly, some questions will require responses only for the WIA or basin, but not both.

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Ocean Breezes South

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Ocean Dreezes South

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Ocean Breezes South

## Response Sheet B1

THRESHOLD ANALYSIS: SIGNIFICANCE

This sheet is the appropriate place for recording the responses to the corresponding questions in Form B. Circle Y (yes) or N (no), being careful to note that the order of Y and N below frequently reverses.

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Form	"A"	Comments	(Ocean	Breeze	South	Study	Site)	
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7,8	Basin = WIA + area 1.5 times as large toward Assateague Channel Sub-watershed = 1/2 area of trailer park to north Watershed = sub-watershed + pine stand to north
22	Answered to describe emergent, estuarine wetland. Scrub/shrub pine land within WIA not considered
28	Flap gates restrict exchange with Assateague Channel
39.5	Flap gates (see above)
42	See comment 22 above
52.2	See comment 22 above
41	Basin for Ocean Breezes South includes a large area of salt marsh adjacent to Assateague Channel

Form "B" Comments (Ocean Breezes South and Chincoteague Channel Marsh Study Sites)

21	Flooded daily, not as valuable for fl	lood storage
	and desynchronization	

39,33 Chincoteague Channel Marsh Study Site is too small for turbid water, high nutrient water disposal